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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SARAJEVO 001915

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SUBJECT: BOSNIA: DODIK AND SILAJDZIC REBUFF HIGH
REPRESENTATIVE

REF: SARAJEVO 1872

Classified By: Michael J. Murphy. Reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

Summary

¶1. (C) High Representative Lajcak delivered his first major policy address to a joint session of Parliament and the state and entity governments. Lajcak warned that there will be "certain consequences" for continued provocation and the stalemate could soon prompt the international community to change its policy towards Bosnia. He urged Bosnian leaders to choose integration instead of isolation. RS PM Milorad Dodik and Bosniak Presidency member Haris Silajdzic both presented responses in which they restated familiar positions, showed no signs of flexibility, and each challenged the High Representative's recommendations. Only opposition leader Zlatko Lagumdzija used the forum to publicly endorse the High Representative's comments and police reform proposal. Members of Lajcak's cabinet tell us that he will soon travel to Brussels to seek Javier Solana's backing for more forceful measures to address the continuing stalemate and political deterioration in Bosnia. End Summary.

Lajcak Address

¶2. (U) On September 6, High Representative Miroslav Lajcak addressed a joint session of the state Parliament and state and entity governments. Lajcak opened his address noting that Bosnia had endured a "horrible year" and Bosnian leaders are now confronted with the choice of either integration or isolation. All Bosnian politicians claim to be for European integration, he said, but sadly, they always find ways to put integration on hold.

¶3. (U) Lajcak acknowledged that the rejection of his police reform proposal had created serious complications for Bosnia's EU integration process and the reform agenda as a whole. He noted that political leaders had appropriated police reform as an arena in which to address the larger political debates facing Bosnia. In doing so the parties had unleashed "chaos that cannot be resolved." Such behavior will result in certain consequences, Lajcak warned. In the face of continued irresponsibility and provocation the international community will be forced to act in appropriate ways and could change its policy towards Bosnia.

¶4. (U) Nonetheless, Lajcak reiterated that his goal was to achieve a police reform agreement in September. Police reform is a European condition for Bosnia to sign a

stabilization and association agreement (SAA) with the EU. No one can force Bosnia to join EU, he said, but once Bosnia decides to join, then it must respect rules of the game. Lajcak urged parties to return to the table to discuss police reform noting that "if we lose September, we lose the whole year and the walls around Bosnia will be that much higher." Rejecting the plan will make the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina the losers, as they will be deprived of a European prospective, their only viable future.

Constitutional Reform

¶5. (U) Turning to constitutional reform, Lajcak said that the constitution can only be amended through constitutionally mandated procedures. No one can separate or abolish entities or other constitutional categories, he added. No one should feel endangered in Bosnia and political leaders should refrain from threats and fearmongering and work to build consensus. Bosnia needs a modern, practical and efficient governance structure. The lack of consensus towards achieving that goal is the reason why the country remains poor, divided and nonfunctional, Lajcak concluded.

Milorad Dodik

¶6. (U) After the High Representative's exit, Republika Srpska Prime Minister Milorad Dodik took the podium to deliver a formal response, commenting that it was inappropriate that the High Representative had departed and would not hear his remarks. Dodik focused on the continued unacceptability of the Lajcak police reform proposal to Serb parties, noting

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that police reform can only be the result of consensus. He also attacked the EU's decision to make police reform an SAA condition, claiming that many European police systems are not compliant with the three EU principles prescribed for Bosnia.

Dodik said he abides fully by Dayton accords under which the Republika Srpska is legal entity that must be respected. Accordingly, the RS Police must stay. Dodik asserted that the Police Reform Directorate generated its report without Serb input and was therefore unacceptable. When all parties accept the continued existence of the RS police there will be no problem in reaching an agreement, Dodik concluded.

Haris Silajdzic

¶7. (U) Bosniak Presidency member Haris Silajdzic followed Dodik to the podium and stated that he agreed entirely with the High Representative that Bosnia is witnessing the blockade of reform. Silajdzic claimed that Federation-based parties had accepted every police reform proposal while RS-based parties had rejected each one. Silajdzic challenged Lajcak to clearly identify those who are obstructing the reform process. He criticized the High Representative and the international community for "balancing and equalizing guilt." As long as this practice continues the political crisis in Bosnia will also continue, Silajdzic said.

Comment

¶8. (C) The High Representative's most public and forceful warning to date had no discernible impact on either Silajdzic or Dodik who followed it with characteristically rigid statements of their positions. Following the address individual deputies of all parties privately expressed to us concern over the defiance of Dodik and Silajdzic and the implications for near-term political stability. A senior member of Lajcak's cabinet told us that the High Representative will travel to Brussels the week of September 10 to seek the support of Javier Solana and Olli Rehn to escalate the pressure on Dodik and Silajdzic. Lajcak is

contemplating measures that will reassert the international community's authority and stop the continuing political radicalization in Bosnia. End Comment.

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